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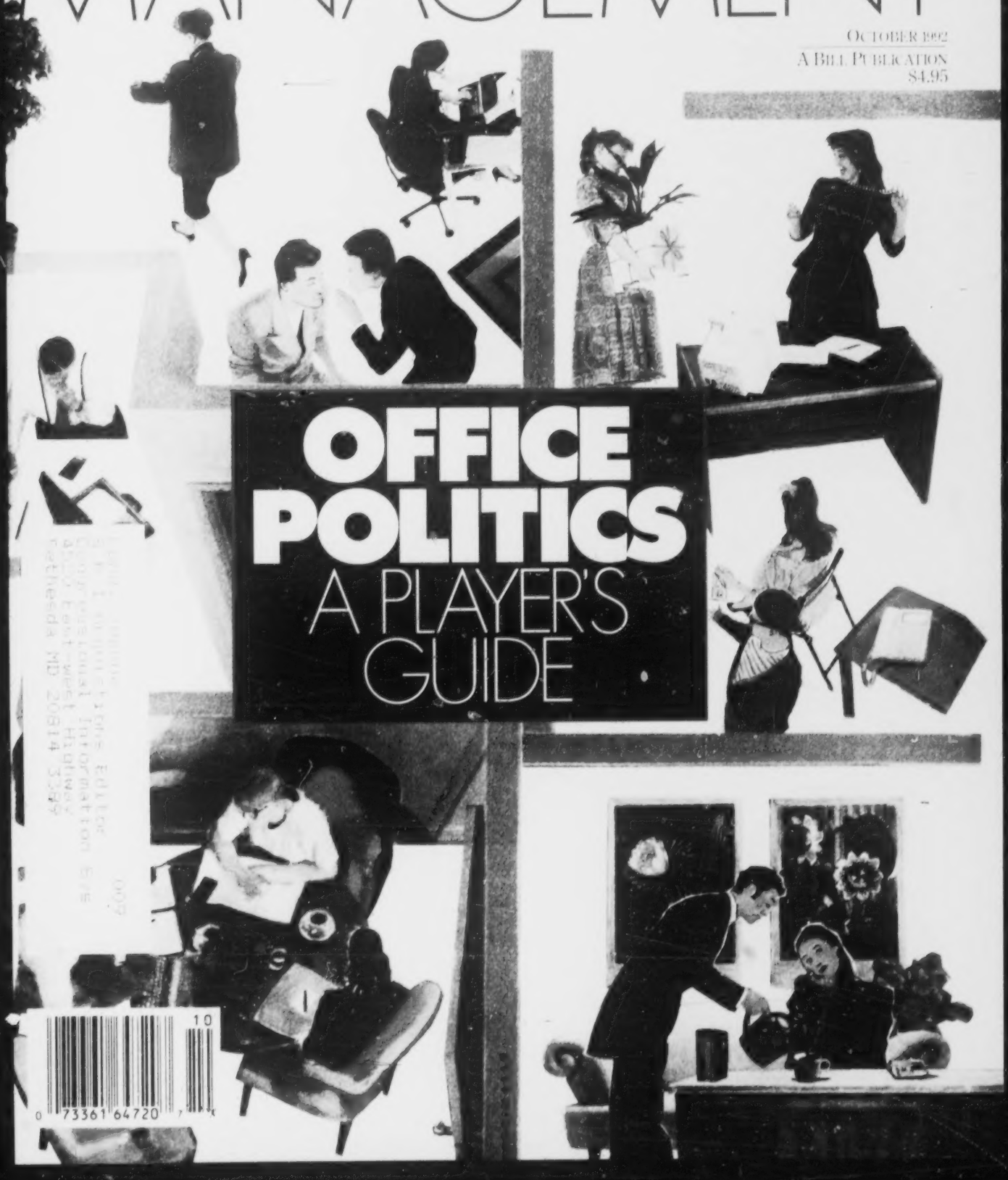

OFFICE POLITICS
A PLAYER'S GUIDE

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SALES & MARKETING MANAGEMENT

COVER BY ROSANNE PERCIVALLE

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system, a customizable and flexible sales and marketing productivity software package may be all your salespeople need. Some vendors offer laptop versions of a portion of an enterprise-wide system. They also supply remote communications to the home office.

Using laptop-oriented software that's part of a multipurpose sales and marketing system has other advantages as well. In many cases, the applications in this kind of software are relatively simple. For example, a word-processing package found in a sales and marketing system integrated with database management, telemarketing, account management, customer service, etc., won't offer as many options for formatting a document as a full-featured stand-alone word processor, but your field salespeople probably don't need all the functions offered anyway, and it certainly doesn't make sense to pay for them.

According to Peter Perera of the Perera Group, a Boston-based sales and marketing system consulting firm, "During the beginning of the implementation phase, you only want to provide those tools your salespeople need and want. This forces utilization of the system and, in the long run, leads to success."

Another thing to remember is that the more carefully and thoroughly you evaluate the needs and wants of both your salespeople *and their clients*, the more effective your salespeople will be. In other words, your customers are an important part of your automation picture. Be sure to include their needs.

In addition, selling styles and culture, sales environments, and sales cycles all differ from company to company. Thus, keep in mind that the application software that's phased in at different stages of the implementation program won't follow a uniform pattern. Despite this caveat, however, there are three basic applications that will be found at the heart of most automation programs:

1. Account management. This first application—the core of many sales automation systems—is most likely to be custom-designed or modified, since the information collected or retrieved by field sales differs from company to company. Essential to its appeal is the fact that it replaces the many notebooks and files sales reps use to keep themselves informed.

This application must be integrated with the home office database in the form of remote upload and download of data on a daily or weekly basis, which is why purchasing a field laptop support system as a module to the home office sales and marketing system is often so appealing. It helps eliminate the "conflict of needs" among salespeople, sales management, marketing staff, and customer service/support when implementing the information system. Each department is integrated by using a multipurpose sales and marketing software package.

2. Database management. In this second core application, all relevant information should reside in the salesperson's computer—as well as in the home office or other central location. This way, the salesperson has a two-way relationship with the database: First, during daily connections, the rep will upload new information to the home office host computer—including calls made, new contacts, changes to

Salespeople's Software "Wish List"

Two items that typically involve a lot of paperwork and paper handling—expense reports and product catalogs—are high priorities when it comes to future software applications.

Based on replies from 125 respondents, a recent membership survey by the Sales Automation Assn. reveals that future-minded salespeople also seem intent on using PCs to improve their presentations and their word-processing, analysis, and graphics capabilities.

In addition, more than one-third of respondents indicated they developed their software in-house vs. one-quarter who relied on outside vendors and one-fifth who developed it jointly.—*T.C.T.*

SOFTWARE APPLICATION	% USERS CURRENT	% USERS FUTURE
Word processing/misc.	84%	9%
E-mail	83	8
Call history	81	3
Contact management	80	3
Call reporting	79	5
Electronic reports	66	6
Spreadsheets	60	1
Territory management	57	6
Sales forecasting	55	6
Lead tracking	51	6
Proposal generation	50	7
Inquiry/order entry	48	8
Sales/marketing analysis	47	9
Sales presentations	46	9
Expense reporting	45	12
Sales management	44	1
Graphics	43	9
Time management	42	2
Pricing	42	8
Market/business planning	41	7
Schedule management	37	5
Telemarketing	29	4
Marketing management	26	1
Market research	23	3
Product literature	23	7
Customer support	22	1

the biggest pains of rep turnover, namely, loss of account information when a rep quits. A new rep now simply scans the database to immediately learn the prevailing situation at each account and prospect, compared to the weeks—and sometimes months—it used to take to acquire such information.

A TOME—BUT WITH REAL-WORLD FLAVOR

Although it deals primarily with PC-based software vendors, the monthly newsletter *Software Success* has a lot to say about the decisions sales and marketing managers make every day. Before his death earlier this year, editor-publisher David H. Bowen assembled the contents of the newsletter's first three years into something called the *1992 Software Success Reference Book*, a 546-page softcover volume that's available for $29 or free with a one-year subscription to the newsletter.

Reflecting what was uppermost in the minds of subscribers, the book's major discussion areas include promotion, lead generation, pricing, distribution, management issues, customer and technical support, and the sales cycle. In addition, each issue of the newsletter contains the results of a survey on a topical marketing issue plus comments by Bowen on sales problems cited by subscribers or clients of his consulting practice. Because of this, the book has a "real-world" flavor rarely found in sales and marketing texts. The *SSRB* can be ordered by writing to *Software Success*, P.O. Box 9006, San Jose, Cal. 95157-0006; phone: 408-446-2504; fax: 408-255-1098.

COMPUTER CATALOGS FOR THE PRICE-MINDED

Today's canny computer buyers, when shopping for PCs or software, often test rival systems in full-service computer specialty stores. But then they place their orders with low-price mail order outlets, which each year account for a bigger slice of PC industry sales.

For those who want to check the prices of such outlets, *Computer Catalogs* can simplify the search. Listing more than 300 computer catalogs that offer hardware, software, supplies, and accessories, the soft-cover book provides company names and addresses; phone, fax, and toll-free 800 numbers; and dollar volumes for each company. Included are such industry heavyweights as IBM Direct ($75 million), NCR Direct (more than $35 million), and Dell Direct (more than $25 million).

Computer Catalogs (114 pages, $12.95 plus $2.50 for shipping) is published by Todd Publications, Box 301, West Nyack, N.Y. 10994; credit card orders: 800-747-1056.

IS SALES AUTOMATION FOCUS SHIFTING?

Improving customer service has become a leading catalyst for sales force automation (SFA) programs, running close on the heels of boosting sales productivity—the traditional motivator.

These were among the results of a survey conducted by the Dearborn, Mich.-based Sales Automation Assn., released at their recent second annual user conference.

The foremost "justification for implementing sales automation" was to "increase sales," cited by 87% of respondents, followed by "improving customer service" (83%), "provide more time for sales force" (75%), "provide marketing data to company" (63%), and "meet competition" (26%).

And it seems that in contrast to their more suspicious attitude in the early days of SFA, salespeople are now convinced automation is in their best interests. When asked to "characterize their implementation" to date, more than one-third of respondents said, "Our salespeople wouldn't give it up now." The fact that companies have barely scratched the surface of SFA is indicated by the 60% of respondents who said, "We see many more uses for sales automation now that we've come this far."

For more details on the SAA survey, contact Rebecca Drake at 313-278-5655. ❖

S&MM Is Numero Uno

According to the SAA, here's what survey respondents answered when asked: "Which publications do you read regularly to stay up to date on sales automation?"

Sales & Marketing Management	61%
PC World	53
Wall Street Journal	45
Business Week	33
InfoWorld	25
Datamation	21
Personal Selling Power	9
MacUser	3
Other	26

SOURCE: Sales Automation Assn.

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